

LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE



Minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2011

Present: The Director of Taught Programmes (Professor G. Moore) (in the Chair), the Director of Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes (Professor R. Gray), the Director of Partnerships (Ms E. Towner), LTC Director of Staff Development (Mr P. Levy), Associate Deans (LTQC) (Mr I. Farr, Dr S. Connolly, Dr B. Milner and Dr N. Spalding), Mr D. Youmans* (attending on behalf of the Academic Officer of the Union of UEA Students (Ms R. Handforth)* and the Student Member nominated by the Union of UEA Students (Mr D. Smith)* (* except for business marked**).

With: The Head of the Learning, Teaching and Quality Office (Ms A.E. Rhodes), the Library Director (Mr N. Lewis), the Assistant Registrars (Dr J. Ashman, Mr L. Daly, Ms C. Gray, Ms J. Jones, Ms E. Roberts and Ms M. Steele)

Apologies: Members: The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor T.B. Ward), the Deputy Registrar and Secretary (Mr R. Evans), , the Dean of Students (Dr A. Grant), Mrs C. Dobson (UCS Rep), Mr G. Sorrell (City College Rep), and the representative of the Graduate Students' Association (Miss L. Sosa-Vargos). In attendance: the Director of University Services (Dr A. Blanchflower) the Director of Information Services (Mr J. Colam-French), Dr A. Longcroft, the Equality and Diversity Manager (Ms H. Murdoch), the Head of Partnerships (Mrs S Walker), the University Assessments manager (Mrs L Ward) and the , Senior Administrators (Mr S. Knock, Miss H. Coman and Mr P. Vazquez),

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Dan Youmans who was attending on behalf of the Academic Officer of the Union of UEA Students and D. Smith who was the new member nominated by the Students' Council in place of Christopher Stokes (to whom the Committee sent its thanks and good wishes, noting that the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) had already written to Mr Stokes).

46. MINUTES

Confirmed
the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2011.

47. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

The Chair reported:

- (1) the outcome of the THE: Student Experience Survey in which UEA had achieved third place, ahead of both Oxford and Cambridge – which was most encouraging .
- (2) the appointment of Dr Adam Longcroft as Director of Taught Programmes from 1 August 2011 for 3 years to July, 2014 vice Professor Geoff Moore. (On behalf of members, the Chair congratulated Dr Longcroft on his appointment and wished him well in his new role).
- (3) that the QAA was seeking nominations for student reviewers for Institutional review in England and Northern Ireland and that the attention of the Union of UEA Students had been drawn to this.

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- (4) the letter from OFFA in relation to fees setting had been received. (See Section C, item C7, and LTC intranet site for details).
- (5) the Committee had received a document from FOH detailing guidance to students on the use of social networking which was presented for information. (See Section C, item C8, for details).
- (6) the Committee had received papers on external consultations. (See Section C, item C9, for details).
- (7) that the first LTC Education Strategies Day would be held on 5 May 2011. Members were reminded of on-line area for discussion ahead of the strategy day which would help shape the agenda.
- (8) that the HEFCE funding letter had been sent to the University on 16 March. There was a summary of the HEFCE budget on HEFCE's website. UEA income for 2011/12 was down 4.3%, ahead of more severe cuts from 2012/13.

48. CONFIRMATION OF CHAIR'S ACTION

Confirmed

Chair's action in approving the following new prize regulations and amendments to existing prizes:

AMS: Amendment to the Will Jordan Memorial Scholarship
PHI: Prize for distinguished performance by an MA student

(A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. LTC10D054)

49. ELLMINATE

Considered

a report on how live classroom software was being piloted by UEA. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. LTC10D055)

(In discussion it was noted that:

- (i) CSED's learning technologists (Jo Bruce and Andy Mee) were facilitating the pilots and would be very keen and willing to visit Schools to discuss use of the technology. Of particular interest was the potential for carbon reduction benefits in using the virtual experience. Its efficacy too in remote learning was increasingly topical;
- (ii) there were no technical barriers to using Elluminate to increase virtual contact between staff and students in Norwich and UEA London. SSF was exploring the use of Elluminate in PPD training and with part-time students. FOH was working with part-time post-registration students. Feedback included reports that it is a near-conference experience;

- (iii) the current licence was due to expire in 2013. The cost of a full licence was approximately £50k per annum (around which figure ISD might be able to negotiate). As some courses were being set-up around the use of Elluminate it was requested that the licensing issue receive attention well in advance. The forthcoming LTC Educational Strategies day on 5 May would include IT developments, and so consideration of where priorities in investment should be, such as audio streaming or lecture capture, would be timely. Part of the consideration should also include discussion on support and servicing and cross-over issues into collaborative working (which SSF is exploring) as there were implications for successfully bidding for research funds.)

50. ENHANCING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE : LEARNING AND TEACHING DAY

Noted

outline arrangements for the Learning and Teaching Day on Tuesday 3 May 2011. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. LTC10D056)

51. POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH PROGRAMMES POLICY GROUP

Considered

a report.(A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. LTC10D057)

ENDORSED

- (1) the proposed revised Guidance Note on the definition of Category 'A' and staff candidates and the assignment of PGR students into Category A or Category B in accordance with the proposed guidelines
- (2) the review of external examiners' reports 2009-10 which concluded that external examiners continued to be very positive about candidates' work and performance in the viva and indicative of a clear position of confidence in the quality and standards of research degrees at the University.

Recommended

that the proposed recommendation for a threshold to be established regarding skills training for laboratory and fieldwork demonstrators be reconsidered by the Policy Group.

(In discussion, members:

- (i) welcomed the Policy Group's continuing discussions with regard to supervisory requirements, noting that current proposals under consideration included a definition of informal and formal supervision, the number of supervisory meetings required per year and requirements for refresher training. It was likely that one of the outputs of the internal review of supervision would be an updated good practice guide. Another was a requirement that all new supervisors would need to complete a training course and a top-up training course every three years. Members looked forward to receiving proposals at a future meeting of the Committee;

- (ii) noted that the Director of Research Programmes had conducted an informal review of what PGR students and their supervisors considered to be the three key characteristics of a good supervisory experience. Whilst responses were relatively low, both groups were in agreement with regard to the highest ranked characteristics, these being: availability, sensitivity/support; and academic guidance including provision of prompt and timely feedback;
- (iii) expressed concern that the rate of response from Science on the annual review of progress forms for 2009-10 was poorer than for the other Faculties (recognising that the Associate Dean (PGR) had been very tenacious in his efforts). This would need to improve;
- (iv) were encouraged by the overall confidence in the quality and standards of research degrees at the University. This would be reported to Senate. Examiners had identified problems with presentation, referencing and typographic errors in some theses and this had prompted the Policy Group to produce guidelines regarding the use of proof-readers. There were also constructive comments about the regulations for the PhD by Publication, training and support for students and on a few regulatory and procedural matters which would be looked at by the Policy Group;
- (v) noting the update with regard to PGR Skills Training and Roberts funding, welcomed in particular the development of a "Work Ready" programme on 13 May 2011 aimed at improving the basic business skills of PGR students;.
- (vi) requested that the Policy Group revisit the issue of training required to be undertaken by PGR students who are laboratory and fieldwork demonstrators. . The threshold of 12 hours per year for determining the level of training required (the full CSED Teaching Skills course or tailored School-based training) needed further consideration both in terms of whether there were several activities being demonstrated or if there is one activity being demonstrated repeatedly. There was also a need for monitoring within Schools of the quality of demonstration. PRPPG would also reconsider the relationship between the CSED- and Faculty-run courses and accreditation issues;.
- (vii) clarified that there were four sessions of 3-hours, not 3 sessions of School-based training in HUM;
- (viii) were invited to respond to the Secretary of the Policy Group in respect of the consultation by the Quality Assurance Agency on the characteristics of doctoral degrees and agreed that the outcomes of the University's consideration would be conveyed to a future meeting of the Committee.)

52. UEA LONDON

Considered

- (1) an update from the Dean of UEA London. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. LTC10D070);
- (2) an updated action plan from the LTC UEA London sub-group. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. LTC10D058);

(In discussion it was noted that:

- (i) a number of issues reported by students and being considered by the management team were around IT services and sense of being part of the wider UEA community. The existence of an Almanac might help the Library and other groups to identify appropriate opportunities to be a presence in key places at key times. This might also help strengthen the sense of connection with Norwich and the issues surrounding identity;
- (ii) the terms of the SLA regarding IT services had been clarified: INTO UEA London students and staff do not have access to UEA Blackboard, because of the involvement with City University and the consequent licensing restrictions;
- (iii) contrary to the indication in the report, approval for the NBS Masters and IBM courses had not yet been given; further details of outstanding actions were provided in the updated action plan;
- (iv) space issues were being addressed in London with the involvement of key stakeholders in Norwich. Making private space available for prayer was being investigated;
- (v) the evidence from the recent Masters Staff Student Liaison Committee was that IT services and availability and links with UEA Norwich were key problem areas.)

53. FACULTY ASSOCIATE DEANS (LEARNING, TEACHING AND QUALITY)

Considered

oral reports from Faculty Associate Deans

- (i) FOH reported that it was holding a strategy half-day to discuss employment, assessment and feedback issues, and the desire to have less constraining marking descriptors that would allow a wider use of the marking range.
- (ii) HUM, SCI and SSF reported that their Faculties were engaged in consideration of the new academic model, which would be the focus of the additional meeting of the Committee on 27 April.

54. PARTNERSHIPS OFFICE ACTIVITY

Considered

a report. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. LTC10D059)

RESOLVED

- (1) to give formal recognition to the name of the London Academy of Diplomacy (LAD) (being a part of INTO UEA London) as a brand for the suite of UEA-validated courses in the area of International Diplomacy.

- (2) to confirm approval in principle to two further Masters courses to be offered by the London Academy of Diplomacy:
- MA in International Communication and Diplomacy
 - MA in International Security and Diplomacy

- (3) to grant approval in principle to the following course proposals from other partner institutions:

City College, Norwich

- BA (Hons) Creative Practice and Enterprise (One year top-up from Foundation Degree)
- BA (Hons) Leadership and Management (One year top-up from Foundation Degree) subject to comments from the School of Education and Lifelong Learning with regard to potential competition issues with the University's top-up programme, BA (Hons) in Professional Studies

Easton College

- BSc (Hons) Equitation and Coaching
- BSc (Hons) Agriculture

(In discussion it was noted that:

(With regard to the London School of Diplomacy)

- (i) discussions were taking place about the potential for the delivery of the Diplomacy suite of courses at other locations outside the UK. Should these developments come to fruition (ie following successful validation) the intention would be to adopt the same name style at each of the locations, e.g. the Paris Academy of Diplomacy, etc.
- (ii) in addition to the diplomacy courses, developments in the area of applied languages were planned in collaboration with UEA's School of Language and Communication Studies. With these plans in mind, consideration was being given to an overarching title (in addition to LAD) that would encompass both the diplomatic courses and any potential related applied language provision. Details would be brought to LTC once plans are at a more advanced stage;
- (iii) LAD students were part of the University's joint venture with INTO UEA. (The Partnerships Office undertook to clarify students' status with the Library so that issues such as electronic access to resources and head-count for licensing purposes could be considered with confidence.)
- (iv) the MA courses had yet to receive final 'sign-off' by the Joint Board of Study, but had already been considered at a validation event;

(With regard to regional partners: City College, Norwich and Easton College)

- (v) validation of courses at regional partners were a clear indication of the University's commitment to supporting widening participation. The terms of the OFFA letter raised the importance of this type of activity and commitment.)

55. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT: NEW COURSE APPROVALS AND PROCESS

Considered

- (1) approval in principle for:

School of Political, Social and International Studies

MA in Broadcast Journalism: Theory and Practice. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. LTC10D076)

ENDORSED

The Committee also granted approval to the course proceeding to recruitment ahead of full sign-off of the course proposal at the next Faculty LTQC.

(In discussion it was noted that:

- (i) HUM would be seeking a minimum IELTS score of 6.5 for students from non-English speaking backgrounds with the overall 6.5 comprising a minimum score of 7.0 in written and spoken English;
- (iii) that previous raised by the Committee (such as the incorporation of h Media Law and discussion with SSF about this and the use of the studio) had been resolved. Students would be able to use facilities at EPIC and BBC Norwich as well as the on-site studio. The course was confirmed as being 12 months (1 year) in duration;
- (iii) the Partnerships Office would facilitate discussion between HUM and CCN with regard to contacts for placements for CCN's undergraduate journalism course.)

- (2) a report on an audit of new courses approved by the Associate Deans and Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee in accordance with the University's Code of Practice: Assuring and Enhancing Teaching Quality. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. LTC10D061)

RESOLVED

- (1) that further guidance be given to Faculty Executives and FLTQCs in respect of the cumulative effect of the introduction of a number of new course proposals. This would be incorporated within the policy document;
- (2) there should be a clearer route for the Committee to consider in full any new course proposal where it deems that there are relevant issues for discussion. This too would become part of the policy document.

- (3) further guidance be given to Faculties in respect of communicating and recording within Quality files of the consideration of Business Cases by Faculty Executives. This also to become part of the policy document.
- (4) the Planning Office be asked to develop a template for costing new courses.

(In discussion it was noted:

- (iv) that examination of the new course approval process has revealed that appropriate linkage with Admissions could be improved, noting that poor recruitment to courses is considered at RAMP but not LTC;
- (v) the process should state more explicitly that any course proposal can be considered in full by LTC if particular issues make it appropriate to do so. There might be need for a sub-group of LTC to sift course proposal business to bring critical issues to the attention of the full LTC. This might help stimulate a more robust system for bringing about course closure. Course closures are in Section C of the LTC agenda and might require labelling to make course closures more prominent.
- (vi) the links between the business and the academic cases needs to be considered in any future review of the new course proposal process.)

56. LTC REVIEWS

Considered
oral reports on

- (1) the new academic model

(In discussion it was noted that:

- (i) consultation responses from Schools were now being received. The response of the Union of UEA Students to the proposals was welcomed and was now available to view on the new academic model website. The most prominent issues turned on module choice and size (credits);
- (ii) LTC would be asked to agree to a minimum size of module, which might be 20 credits.
- (iii) LTC would also be asked to consider course templates as a way forward;.
- (iv) there were concerns about use of language referring to restricted choice, rather than defined choice. This ('restricted choice') did not accurately reflect the situation and should be avoided. The University had identified that "free" choice could be constrained and by creating a defined module range which better fitted the objectives of a course and with the timetable,

there would be greater clarity and understanding around 'choice';

- (v) HUM had undertaken a lot of work at Faculty level, and had considered course redesign alongside the new funding regime from 2012 by asking the question, will students do this course at £9,000 per annum? Issues had focussed on module choice, 3-hour exams, synoptic assessment – which was often misunderstood and might be better relabelled course-level outcomes - the balance of formative and summative work, student concern with fewer items of counting work, and use of the six week University examination period;
 - (vi) in SCI there was no apparent desire to move to module credit values above 20, in general.
 - (vii) in SSF there was mixed level of enthusiasm for moving to larger modules (in terms of credit value) largely in courses where there would be professional accreditation implications of any such changes;
 - (viii) PGT course proposals from summer 2011 needed to consider the principles of the new academic model.
 - (ix) some of the concerns around the notion of interdisciplinarity of courses was misplaced, given that it could be argued that what UEA offers is opportunities for multidisciplinary study. This perspective would require further consideration and discussion.)
- (2) Programme Monitoring and Review Group (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. LTC10D062)

(In discussion it was noted that:

- (i) in some SCI Schools there was concern that the light touch approach would take something away from the process of staff monitoring and development via annual academic evaluation of modules. It was felt that module monitoring had previously provided hard data on staff performance which determined who might benefit from peer support. The student view was that the onus should not be on students to identify poor teaching - this must be at senior management level. It was also noted that at the last meeting of LTC it was agreed that peer review of teaching every two years (as a minimum) would be mandatory and that this would be a means to put in place more support, development and training, where needed;
- (ii) apart from the efficiency driver for a light touch approach, module evaluation had had little to offer in respect of helping students progress through a course. The student view was that feedback should be contributing to the monitoring and improvement of courses, rather than the narrower focus on modules. It was also noted that whilst the evidence suggested that students like modules, feedback from the

NSS, on the other hand, reveals concerns about courses. It was considered that the University would benefit more from annual course-level surveys which could be compared with NSS responses to see the effect of the University's responses to student feedback, for example;

- (iii) an observation that had emerged following the recent University-wide consultation on assessment with the new academic model was it was not entirely clear that quality assurance processes were in fact looking at the right things. This was an issue to be further considered in the development of assessment strategies.)

57. PROGRAMME MONITORING AND REVIEW 2011/2012

Considered

a report. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. LTC10D063)

ENDORSED

the proposal that Programme Reviews scheduled for 2011-12 should be deferred by one year only to 2012-13 with a consequent deferral of all subsequent reviews.

(In endorsing this proposal, members:

- (i) noted that there were two main drivers: the development of the new academic model and the parallel Integration Project;
- (ii) were confident that quality and standards would not be put at risk as a consequence, noting that external examiners' reports consistently show that academic standards were appropriate and had raised no significant concerns about the structure or content of courses. Nor had Programme Reviews indicated serious causes for concern;
- (iii) were reassured that the proposed deferral would still mean that every course in the University would have been reviewed within the last five years up to this point and no review would occur more than six years since the previous review under this one-off deferral;
- (iv) were informed that the scheduled review of provision in NAM in 2011-12 related to post-registration courses, not pre-registration courses.

58. ITEMS FOR REPORT

(1) FACULTY ASSOCIATE DEANS (LEARNING, TEACHING AND QUALITY)

Received

minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee:

SSF (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. LTC10D064)
FOH (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. LTC10D065)

(2) PARTNERSHIPS

Received

a report. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. LTC10D066)

(3) AUDIT OF APPOINTMENT OF BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

Received

a report. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. LTC10D067)

(4) NEW COURSE PROPOSALS

Received

a report. (This report also contained notification of course closures)
(A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. LTC10D068)(5) OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATOR FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Received

the number of "Completion Internal Processes" issued by UEA during the calendar year, 2010, as required under new OIA rules. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. LTC10D069)

(6) UNIVERSITIES UK : EUROPE UNIT

Reported

that the Europe Unit has published a booklet entitled "European Higher Education in facts and figures".

(This may be consulted at:

http://www.europeunit.ac.uk/sites/europe_unit2/resources/Europe%20unit_stats%20booklet.FINAL.pdf)

(7) FUNDING OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Received

a copy of the letter from the Office For Fair Access. LTC10D070)

(8) SOCIAL NETWORKING: GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

Received

guidance issued by the Faculty of Health to students on appropriate use of social networking sites. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. LTC10D071)

(9) EXTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

Received

the University's responses to:

- (1) the consultation by the Office of Independent Adjudicator with regard to the Pathway Consultation – 2nd round. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. LTC10D072)

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- (2) the consultation by the Quality Assurance Agency on proposed changes to the Academic Infrastructure. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. LTC10D073) (for the proposed changes, see :

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/news/consultation/ai>
- (3) the joint consultation by the Higher Education Funding Council for England, Universities UK and GuildHE on proposals for the provision of public information about higher education. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. LTC10D074)
- (4) 1994 Group response to the HEFCE/UUK/GuildHE joint consultation on changes to information published by institutions. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. LTC10D075)